

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1 and 2 as follows.

1. (Currently Amended) A water-based ink for inkjet printers, said water-based ink comprising at least a water-insoluble colorant, a block copolymer of a polyvinyl ether structure comprising at least one kind of hydrophilic segments each of which contains acidic groups and at least one kind of hydrophobic segments, water and an alkali, characterized in that ~~a content of said alkali is such that, when an infrared absorption intensity ascribable to ionic groups to be formed upon addition of an excess amount of said alkali to said block copolymer is supposed to be 100%, an infrared absorption intensity ascribable to ionic groups formed by dissociation of said acidic groups contained in said block copolymer becomes at least 80%, with a proviso that said content does not exceed twice as much as a smallest amount of said alkali that an infrared absorption ionic groups to be formed from said block copolymer becomes 100%~~ the acidic groups in said block copolymer have been neutralized by addition of said alkali in a predetermined amount M that satisfies the following equation:

$$A \leq M \leq (2 \times B)$$

wherein:

A is an amount of said alkali to be added for obtaining an infrared absorption intensity as low as 80% of an upper limit of infrared absorption intensity ascribed to ionic groups to be formed upon addition of an excess amount of said alkali to said block copolymer, and

B is a smallest amount of said alkali to be added to reach said upper limit of infrared absorption intensity.

2. (Currently Amended) A water-based ink according to claim 1, wherein said acidic groups contained in said block copolymer are carboxyl ~~20~~ groups.

3. (Previously Presented) A water-based ink according to claim 1, wherein said colorant is a pigment.

4. (Previously Presented) A water-based ink according to claim 1, wherein said colorant is a water-insoluble dye.

5. (Previously Presented) A water-based ink according to claim 2, wherein said colorant is a pigment.

6. (Previously Presented) A water-based ink according to claim 2, wherein said colorant is a water-insoluble dye.